

## **Complaints point to massive 6P scam by gov't insiders**

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**By Aidila Razak**

While thousands of migrant workers have been caught in the immigration dragnet, hundreds of complaints have emerged indicating the existence of a multi-million ringgit scam involving the 6P foreign worker legalisation programme.

With those scammed provided with copies of Immigration Department and Home Ministry documents, there are also fears that the scam involves government insiders.

NONEPolice reports lodged in the past month show that in one case, a single agent alone had raked in more than RM100,000 from a group of 26 migrant workers.

However, the workers interviewed by Malaysiakini under conditions of anonymity claim that this is just the tip of the iceberg, as the same agent had allegedly cheated about 200 migrants in the Pudu area in Kuala Lumpur alone.

Petaling Jaya-based NGO Tenaganita meanwhile said that 690 migrant workers have lodged complaints with them claiming to have been "cheated by various 6P agents".

According to the police reports, the agent had charged an average RM4,000 per worker to register onto the 6P programme.

Passports taken

The agent, who is alleged to be a foreigner married to a Malaysian and whose company is not part of the ministry-authorized list of 6P agents, had reportedly also taken the migrants' original passports.

NONEPoorly educated, lacking proficiency in Bahasa Malaysia or English and now undocumented, only about 10 percent of those who were cheated have dared to lodge police reports on their predicament.

Tenaganita programme director Glorene Dass said that it is possible that there are thousands of workers affected by fraudulent agents, but it is unclear how many have been nabbed in the ongoing raid.

"When they lodge reports with us, we give them a letter so that they can show it to

Immigration if they get caught.

"In the letter, we ask the Immigration to contact us if they have been arrested as they have filed complaints of having been cheated.

"So far the Immigration has not contacted us, but we don't know if this means none of the complainants have been arrested."

NONE She said that it is also unclear what will happen to the migrants who get caught, as it is not specified if they will be charged and punished or simply deported.

Immigration Department secretary-general Alias Ahmad (right) reportedly said that his department has been instructed to build a temporary holding centre in Selangor for now.

As for the 26 migrants who had lodged police reports, one was picked up on Tuesday night, said Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC) labour advocate Peter Kandiah.

Forgery claimed

Kandiah, who has been assisting the migrants with their woes, said on top of the police reports, MTUC has also lodged complaints with the Immigration Department and the Home Ministry.

Among the documents provided to the migrants by the agents include one from the Home Ministry stating that the migrants have been included in the 6P programme and an Immigration Department "illegal foreign worker registration slip".

They were also provided with a document bearing the Home Ministry's letterhead, addressed to the Myanmar Embassy and signed by a senior ministry official.

NONE "I showed the letter to him (the official) and he said his signature had been forged," Peter said.

The letter informs the embassy that the migrant mentioned has been registered under 6P and is being considered for legalisation.

Malaysiakini emailed the official last week and provided the reference numbers of all the letters he purportedly signed, but has not received a reply.

Calls to his number as listed on the ministry website have also failed to be picked up.

The portal has also repeatedly contacted the Immigration Department and the alleged fake agent for response, but none have reverted.

The agent and the Home Ministry official's identity is withheld pending their response.

The 6P legalisation programme, which ran from July 2011 to April 2012, allowed for registration and legalisation of foreign workers through 336 companies appointed by the Home Ministry.

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